

## What kind of local and regional development and for whom?

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Postprint / Postprint

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

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### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Pike, A., Rodríguez-Pose, A., & Tomaney, J. (2007). What kind of local and regional development and for whom? *Regional Studies*, 41(9), 1253-1269. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343400701543355>

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### What kind of local and regional development and for whom?

Journal:	<i>Regional Studies</i>
Manuscript ID:	CRES-2006-0278.R1
Manuscript Type:	Main Section
JEL codes:	O1 - Economic Development < O - Economic Development, Technological Change, and Growth, R58 - Regional Development Policy < R5 - Regional Government Analysis < R - Urban, Rural, and Regional Economics
Keywords:	Local, Regional, Development

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What kind of local and regional development and for whom?

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Abstract

This paper asks the question what kind of local and regional development and for whom? It examines what is meant by local and regional development, its historical context, its geographies in space, territory, place and scale and its different varieties, principles and values. The socially uneven and geographically differentiated distribution of who and where benefits and loses from particular forms of local and regional development is analysed. A holistic, progressive and sustainable version of local and regional development is outlined with reflections upon its limits and political renewal. Locally and regionally determined development models should not be developed independently of more foundational principles and values such as democracy, equity, internationalism and justice. Specific local and regional articulations are normative questions and subject to social determination and political choices in particular national and international contexts.

## Introduction

One of the biggest myths is that in order to foster economic development, a community must accept growth. The truth is that growth must be distinguished from development: growth means to get bigger, development means to get better - an increase in quality and diversity (Local Government Commission 2004: 1).

This local government association in the United States holds a specific interpretation of the kind of local and regional development it considers appropriate and valuable. Particular interpretations differ from place to place and evolve over time. To grasp the form and nature of local and regional development, the basic understandings of what it is, what it is for and, in a normative sense, what it should be about must be addressed. As a contribution to reflections on the history of the 'region' and the chronology, purpose and future of regional studies (Pike 2007), this paper seeks to ask the question of what kind of local and regional development and for whom? First, definitions are examined to understand what is meant by local and regional development, to establish its historical context and to explore the 'where' of local and regional development in space, territory, place and scale. Second, the nature, character and forms of local and regional development are investigated to reveal its different varieties, principles and values in different places and time periods. Third, the objects, subjects and social welfare dimensions are addressed in order to illustrate the often socially uneven and geographically differentiated distribution of who and where

benefits and loses from particular forms of local and regional development. Last, a holistic, progressive and sustainable version is outlined and reflections offered upon the limits and political renewal of local and regional development. Our argument is, first, that we need to consider the basic principles to get a better analytical purchase on the question of ‘what kind of local and regional development and for whom?’, and, second, locally and regionally determined models of development should not be developed independently of more foundational and universal principles and values such as democracy, equity, internationalism, justice and solidarity. The specific local and regional forms and articulations of such principles and values are normative questions and subject to social determination and political choices in particular national and international contexts.

**What is local and regional development?**

Definitions are a critically important and deceptively difficult starting point for understanding what is meant by local and regional development. They are complex and intertwined with conceptions of what local and regional development is for and what it is designed to achieve (Pike *et al.* 2006). Referring to conceptions of ‘development’, Williams (1983: 103) noted that “very difficult and contentious political and economic issues have been widely obscured by the apparent simplicity of these terms”. Local and regional development has historically been dominated by economic concerns such as growth, income and employment (Armstrong and Taylor 2000). Development can even be wholly equated with this relatively narrow focus upon local and

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3 regional *economic* development (Beer *et al.* 2003: 5). For Storper (1997),  
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6 local and regional prosperity and wellbeing depends upon the sustained  
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8 increases in employment, income and productivity integral to economic  
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10 development.  
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15 Rooted in dissatisfaction with mainstream approaches and critiques of  
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17 orthodox neo-classical economics in the 1960s and 1970s, 'alternative'  
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19 approaches began to question the dominant economic focus of local and  
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21 regional development on firms in a national and international economic  
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23 context (Geddes and Newman 1999). Taking a particular normative position,  
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25 more local, even community-level (Haughton 1999; Reese 1997), and  
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27 socially-oriented approaches emerged as part of alternative economic  
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29 strategies in the UK and US, often challenging national frameworks through  
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31 new institutions at the local and regional level, such as enterprise boards,  
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33 sectoral development agencies and community associations, and contesting  
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35 capital locally through promoting 'restructuring for labour' (Cochrane 1983;  
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37 Gough and Eisenschitz 1993; Zeitlin 1989; see also Bingham and Mier 1993;  
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39 Fitzgerald and Green Leigh 2002).  
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48 Building upon the pioneering experimentalism of the 1980s and stimulated by  
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50 growing concerns about the character, quality and sustainability of local and  
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52 regional 'development', the often dominant economic focus has broadened in  
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54 recent years in an attempt to address social, ecological, political and cultural  
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56 concerns (Geddes and Newman 1999; Morgan 2004). Unequal experiences  
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58 of living standards and wellbeing between places even at equal or  
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comparable income levels has fuelled dissatisfaction with conventional economic indicators of ‘development’ (Sen 1999). The ‘post-development’ critique (Gibson-Graham 2003) and recent research on alternative concepts working with broader, more social versions of the economy (Leyshon *et al.* 2003) have further increased the range and diversity of approaches to local and regional development. Reducing social inequality, promoting environmental sustainability, encouraging inclusive government and governance and recognising cultural diversity have been emphasised to varying degrees within broadened definitions of local and regional development (Haughton and Counsell 2004; Keating 2005). Often uncertain moves toward notions of quality of life, social cohesion and wellbeing are being integrated or balanced, sometimes uneasily, with continued concerns about economic competitiveness and growth.

Broader understandings provide new opportunities to think about and define local and regional development. What local and regional development is – in the present. What it can or could be – in terms of future visions. And, normatively, what it should be – in the sense of people in places making value-based judgements about priorities and what they consider to be appropriate ‘development’ for their localities and regions. No singularly agreed, homogenous understanding of development of or for localities and regions exists. Particular notions of ‘development’ are socially determined by particular groups and/or interests in specific places and time periods. What constitutes ‘local and regional development’ varies both within and between countries and its differing articulations change over time (Beer *et al.* 2003;

Danson *et al.* 2000; Reese 1997). Incremental and, sometimes, radical shifts occur, shaped by practice, experience, assessment and reflection. Debate and deliberation can transform conceptions and practices of local and regional development. Models can be imposed and contested. Innovation can incorporate formerly alternative approaches into the mainstream. Changing government agendas during political cycles can recast local and regional development policy. But, as we argue below, local, regional and national interests determine local and regional development in specific and particular contexts, albeit in relation to broader economic and political processes.

Given this potential for geographical differentiation and change over time, considering the evolution of definitions and conceptions of local and regional development can anchor its main themes and dimensions in their historical context (Pike *et al.* 2006; see also Cowen and Shenton 1996). The notion of 'development' as sustained increases in income per capita is a relatively recent social and historical phenomenon evident since the 18th Century and closely associated with modernity itself (Cypher and Dietz 2004). In generalised terms, a post-war era of 'developmentalism' discernable up to the 1970s has given way in a highly geographically uneven and contested manner to an emergent and uncertain era of 'globalism' (Table 1).

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE



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This periodisation contextualises the evolution of conceptions of 'development'. In each era there are distinctive theoretical and ideological frameworks, 'development' definitions, theories of social change, agents of development and specific forms of local and regional development. Significantly, what constitutes 'development' changes over time, shaped by critique, debate, experience and evaluation. Second, 'development' definitions are geographically differentiated, varying within and between places over time. However, critique of the linear stages model of 'development as modernisation' toward 'developed', industrialised and 'advanced' country standards of living and norms suggests that the increased diversity of approaches and pathways of 'development' are not necessarily proceeding towards the same singular destination (Rangan 2007). Third, the historically dominant focus upon economic development has broadened, albeit highly unevenly, to include social, ecological, political and cultural concerns. Last, the national and, increasingly, supra-national 'development' focus has evolved multi-scale understandings to incorporate differing meanings of the local and the regional. Advanced, 'developed' industrial countries, economies undergoing transition from central planning, and countries formerly considered as 'developing' have been reincorporated into a much more global development question than hitherto:

...as globalization and international economic integration have moved forward, older conceptions of the broad structure of world economic geography as comprising separate blocs (First, Second and Third Worlds), each with its own developmental dynamic, appear to be giving

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3 way to another vision. This alternative perspective seeks to build a  
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5 common theoretical language about the development of regions and  
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7 countries in all parts of the world, as well as about the broad  
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9 architecture of the emerging world system of production and  
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11 exchange...it recognizes that territories are arrayed at different points  
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13 along a vast spectrum of developmental characteristics (Scott and  
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18 Storper 2003: 582).

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22 As its boundaries shift beyond the national, where local and regional  
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24 development unfolds has become a central question.  
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### 32 *Where is local and regional development?*

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34 However defined, development is a profoundly geographical phenomenon  
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36 and does not unfold in a spatial vacuum devoid of geographical attachments  
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38 or context. The inevitably social process of local and regional development is  
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40 necessarily spatial (Castells 1983) and requires an appreciation of the  
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42 geographical concepts of space, territory, place and scale. Space is an  
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44 integral constituent of economic, social, ecological, political and cultural  
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46 relations and processes, and their geographies condition and shape in  
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48 profound ways how such processes develop (Harvey 1982; Markusen 1987).  
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52 As specific spatial scales, the 'local' and the 'regional' are particular socially  
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54 constructed spatial scales not simply containers in which such processes are  
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56 played out (Hudson 2007; Swyngedouw 1997). Spaces are causal and  
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explanatory factors in economic growth not just receptacles for or manifestations of its outcomes (Scott and Storper 2003).

At a time when the spatially ‘unbounded’ and relational character of localities and regions continues to be debated (Allen and Cochrane 2007; Allen *et al.* 1998; Jones and Macleod 2007; Lagendijk 2007; Massey 2004), it is important not to lose sight of the territorially embedded nature of their development and agency. While flows of ideas, people and resources remain integral to territorial development processes (Hirschman 1958), the expression of localities and regions in which different kinds of development may or may not be taking place in specific time periods is often as territorially bounded units with particular administrative, political, social and cultural forms and identities, albeit those boundaries are continually being reworked and constructed anew at different spatial scales. Within such territories, states and other quasi- or non-state institutions — associations of capital, labour and civil society — engage to differing degrees and in different ways in local and regional development and its government and governance. Even in an era of more globally integrated economies and more complex, multi-layered institutional architectures, locally and regional rooted understandings and agency remain integral to the reproduction and exercise of political power:

The global media and markets that shape our lives beckon us to a world beyond boundaries and belonging. But the civic resources we need to master these forces, or at least to contend with them, are still to be found in the places and stories, memories and meaning, incidents

and identities, that situate us in the world and give our lives their moral particularity (Sandel 1996: 349).

Territorial boundaries form defined areas, evolving and changing over time (Paasi 1991), within which particular definitions and kinds of local and regional development are articulated, determined and pursued.

While the current phase of accelerated international economic integration means that localities and regions face ostensibly similar development questions, this does not situate local and regional development on an homogenous or uniform geographical plane. 'Development' is concerned with specific and particular places. From Hackney to Honolulu to Hong Kong, each place has evolving histories, legacies, institutions and other distinctive characteristics that impart path dependencies and shape – *inter alia* - its economic assets and trajectories, social outlooks, environmental concerns, politics and culture (Agnew 2002; Martin and Sunley 2006). Such particularities can be both shared and different and can be materially and symbolically important to defining local and regional development. The geographical diversity of places conditions how and why definitions of local and regional development are to a degree contingent and vary both within and between countries and over time (Sen 1999). Local and regional development definitions are inevitably context-dependent (see Storper 1997):

Economic development is not an objective per se. It is a means for achieving well being, according to the culture and the conditions of

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certain populations. Nevertheless the well being target is not the same for people living in New York or in Maputo; only who is living in New York or Maputo could fix what they want to achieve in the medium and long term (Canzanelli 2001: 24).

The particular attributes of places shape whether, how and to what degree specific local and regional development definitions and varieties take root and flourish or fail and wither over time.

Together with space, territory and place, Table 2 demonstrates how economic, social, political, ecological and cultural processes relevant to local and regional development work across and between different scales through the actions of particular agents. While focusing on *local* and *regional* development here, each scale cannot be considered separately from its relations with processes unfolding at other levels and scales (Perrons 2004). Phenomena and processes that may seem somehow ‘external’ or beyond the control or influence of particular localities and regions can have profound impacts. Each scale and level is mutually constitutive: “localities cannot be understood as neatly bounded administrative territories, and places are intrinsically multi-scalar, constituted by social relations that range from the parochial to the global” (Jones *et al.* 2004: 103).

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

### What kind of local and regional development?

In common with the preceding discussion about definitions, no singular meaning exists amongst the different kinds of local and regional development determined by different people and groups in different places at different times. Indeed, recent years have witnessed a growing range and diversity of approaches internationally (Beer *et al.* 2003; Fitzgerald and Green Leigh 2002). The character, form and nature of local and regional development evolve in geographically uneven ways. While recognising the historical context of the uneven emergence of 'globalism' (see Table 1), thinking about the possible kinds of local and regional development encourages the consideration of its different varieties and the principles and values utilised in its determination. What local and regional development is for and is trying to achieve are framed and shaped by its definitions, varieties, principles and values.

#### *Varieties of local and regional development*

Building upon the definitions of what is meant by local and regional development and encountering a growing diversity of approaches, distinctions can be drawn about its different types and nature. Table 3 provides examples, although this list is not exhaustive and does not imply that similar action cannot be taken at other territorial levels. Specific dimensions might be different or receive varying priority in different localities and regions over time.

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Geographical unevenness means such distinctions may be questions of degree, extent or compromise rather than binary opposition. Absolute development means an aspiration for geographically *even* development within and across localities, regions and social groups; relative development suggests *uneven* development. Connecting to the question of local and regional development for whom, whether by default or design, relative development prioritises and privileges particular localities, regions and/or interests and social groups, often exacerbating rather than reducing disparities and inequalities between them. Substantive differences exist between absolute development *of* or relative development *in* a locality or region (Morgan and Sayer 1988). Encompassing traditional top-down and more recent bottom-up approaches (Stöhr 1990), autonomy describes where the power and resources for local and regional development reside. Different emphases may range from strong, high priority and/or radical to weak, low priority and/or conservative. Exogenous, indigenous and/or endogenous forms of growth may constitute the focus. State, market or civil society may provide the institutional lead. Inter-territorial relations encompass differing degrees of competition and/or co-operation (Malecki 2004). Measures include interventions focused upon ‘hard’ infrastructure, such as capital projects, and/or forms of ‘soft’ support, for example training. The objects of local and regional development may be people and/or places and the subjects are the themes upon which ‘development’ is based. The rate of development may seek to balance ‘fast’ development to address pressing social need with a ‘slow’, perhaps more sustainable, outlook. Large and/or small scale projects may be combined. The spatial focus distinguishes the particular geographical

scale of development efforts. Views of sustainability may be relatively strong or weak.

### TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Connected to the recent moves toward broader perspectives discussed above, an increasingly important distinction in the kinds of local and regional development is between its quantitative extent and its qualitative character. The quantitative dimension concerns numeric measures, for example a per capita growth rate of GDP, an increase in productivity, a number of jobs created or safeguarded, new investment projects secured or new firms established. Notwithstanding issues of data availability and reliability, quantitative approaches focus objectively on the absolute or relative change in indicators over specific time periods within and between localities and regions (McCann 2007). The qualitative dimension relates to the nature of local and regional development, for example the sustainability (economic, social, environmental) and forms of growth, the type and 'quality' of jobs, the embeddedness and sustainability of investments, and the growth potential, sectoral mix and social diversity of new firms. Qualitative approaches focus upon subjective concerns informed by specific principles and values of local and regional development socially determined in context within particular localities and regions at specific times. Depending upon the context, the sustainability of growth may be evaluated in terms of its ecological impact; the



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‘quality’ of jobs might be assessed by their employment terms and conditions, relative wage levels, career progression opportunities, and trade union recognition and the extent to which each form of ‘development’ contributes to the enhancement of citizens’ capabilities (Sen 1999). Although efforts have been made recently to quantify such factors, the approach still remains fundamentally qualitative. Research has tended to concentrate on the ‘success’ stories of high-productivity and/or high-cohesion forms of growth, however, neglecting other less desirable, but widespread, types of growth (Sunley 2000).

Quantitative and qualitative dimensions of local and regional development can be integrated but are not necessarily complementary. Localities and regions can experience ‘development’ in quantitative terms but with a problematic qualitative dimension, for example inflationary and short-lived growth, increased low ‘quality’ jobs, disembedded inward investors and/or failing start-up firms. Similarly, localities and regions can witness qualitative ‘development’ that is quantitatively problematic, for example low level, weak (but perhaps more sustainable) growth, insufficient (although potentially good quality) jobs, too few new investments and new firms.

In grappling with the dimensions of growth, ‘high’ and ‘low’ roads to local and regional development have been identified to describe causal relationships between high or low levels of productivity, skills, value-added and wages in relation to the relative levels of sophistication of economic activities (Cooke 1995). The ‘high’ road equates with quantitatively greater, qualitatively better,

more sophisticated and less easily imitated and more sustainable forms of local and regional development. The 'low' road suggests not necessarily quantitatively less but qualitatively worse, less sophisticated and more easily replicated and less sustainable development locally and regionally. While providing one way of thinking and evident in international policy debates, the 'high' and 'low' road distinction may be a question of degree, varying amongst the economic activities in localities and regions and changing over time. Distinguishing between 'high' and 'low' roads is problematic for 'developing' and transition countries and peripheral localities and regions whose relatively low wages and weak social protection may be perceived as advantages within an increasingly competitive international economy, despite their potential contribution to undercutting social standards in a de-regulatory 'race to the bottom' (Standing 1999). What are considered 'appropriate', 'bad', 'good', 'failed' or 'successful' forms of local and regional development are shaped by principles and values socially and politically determined in different places and time periods.

### *Principles and values*

Principles and values shape how specific social groups and interests in particular places define, understand, interpret and articulate what is defined and meant by local and regional development. The worth, desirability and appropriateness of different varieties of local and regional development may be collectively held unanimously, shared with a degree of consensus or subject to contest and differing interpretations by different interests within and

between places over time. Rather than narrowly and simply rational and technocratic calculations, principles and values of local and regional development frame value judgements and raise normative questions about values, ethics and opinions of what should be rather than what is (Markusen 2006). What could and should local and regional development mean? What sorts of local and regional development does a locality or region need and want? What kinds of development are deemed appropriate and inappropriate? What constitutes the ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of specific kinds of development for a locality or region? How should these normative questions be addressed?

Principles and values of local and regional development reflect the relations and balances of power between state, market, civil society and are socially and politically determined within localities and regions. Principles might reflect foundational (Harvey 1996) or universal beliefs held independently of a country’s levels of development such as democracy, equity, fairness, liberty and solidarity (Sen 1999). Individuals and institutions with social power and influence can seek to impose their specific interests and visions of local and regional development but these may be contested (Harvey 2000). It is, then, critical to ask whose principles and values are being pursued in local and regional development. Particular varieties of the political settlements of government and governance of local and regional development are central to how such questions are framed, deliberated and resolved (Hall and Soskice 2001; see also Cooke and Clifton 2005). Such social agency is not wholly autonomous or independent to act and decide its own course of development, however. It is circumscribed by the structural, institutional and historical

context in which it is embedded and the constraints this creates in any consideration of what 'development' is, could or should be about. The social and political determination of the principles and values of local and regional development is a geographically uneven process and principles and values can differ between places and change over time. Particular geographically rooted constructions of 'development' condition the social use of resources with potentially different economic, social, ecological, political and cultural implications, for example whether places seek to address internal social needs or external markets (Williams 1983). Such heterogeneity and contingency underpins the range and diversity of different approaches to local and regional development. Elsewhere, however, localities and regions may seek convergence toward more mainstream and orthodox approaches, for example liberalizing their economies, promoting competition and reducing the role of the state. The principles and values that shape social aspirations may reflect perceived economic, social and political problems and injustices, for example concerning the allocation of public expenditure, the actions of local or trans-national firms, ecological damage or the relative degree of political autonomy. 'Development' in this specific context may then be defined as a 'fairer' allocation of public funding (McKay and Williams 2005), greater regulatory control over the power of firms (Christopherson and Clark 2007), enhanced environmental standards and enhanced political powers.

### **Local and regional development for whom?**

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Definitions and kinds of local and regional development are closely related to the question of local and regional development for whom? Answers to which concern the objects and subjects of local and regional development and the social welfare dimensions of the uneven and geographically differentiated distribution of who and where benefits and losses from particular varieties of local and regional development. The objects of local and regional development are the material things to which ‘development’ action is directed. The subjects are the themes upon which ‘development’ is based. Each provides a means of discerning the implications of specific forms of local and regional development and policies. Social welfare analysis reveals how specific social groups and/or institutional interests may be advantaged by particular varieties of local and regional development. The objects and subjects of local and regional development work across sometimes overlapping levels and scales (Table 4). This distinction can help reveal policy implications – intended or otherwise – and the geographical impacts of spatial and non-spatial policies (Pike *et al.* 2006).

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

The social welfare distribution of who and where benefits and losses from particular varieties of local and regional development is geographically differentiated and changes over time. The distribution of social power and resources within society shapes the economic, social and political inequalities

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3 and experiences of local and regional development (Harvey 1996). The  
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5 relationship between economic efficiency and growth and social equity is a  
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7 recurrent normative issue (Bluestone and Harrison 2000; Scott and Storper  
8  
9 2003). The greater focus on local and regional development accompanied by  
10  
11 an emphasis on efficiency at the sub-national level has often been at the  
12  
13 expense of the redistributive capacities of nation states (Cheshire and Gordon  
14  
15 1998). Still, though, too little is known about the extent to which social  
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17 cohesion is a result or cause of economic growth (Perrons 2004).  
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24 Kuznets' (1960) nationally-focused work argued that further economic growth  
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26 tended to generate inequality at low income levels. Richardson (1979) saw  
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28 regional inequalities as a problem in the early stages of a nation's growth that  
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30 could be ameliorated by redistributive regional policies. While Hirschman  
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32 (1958) indicated that greater initial inequality may represent the natural path  
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34 towards equality. For Kuznets, as income levels per capita increased, a  
35  
36 critical threshold of income is reached and further economic growth and  
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38 higher average per capita income tended to reduce a nation's overall income  
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40 inequality (Figure 1). The "knife-edge" dilemma between growth and equity  
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42 remains central to current debates:  
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51 ...some analysts hold that development policy is best focused on  
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53 productivity improvements in dynamic agglomerations, (thereby  
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55 maximising national growth rates but increasing social tensions), while  
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57 other analysts suggest that limiting inequality through appropriate forms  
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of income distribution (social and/or inter-regional) can lead to more viable long-run development programmes (Scott and Storper 2003: 588).

Local and regional development grapples with this uneven shift from the more equity-focused, donor-recipient model toward growth-oriented policies and their potential to reinforce rather than ameliorate spatial disparities (Pike *et al.* 2006; see also Dunford 2005; Fothergill 2005; Moulaert and Sekia 2003) (Figure 2).

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

Inspired by broader notions of local and regional development, social welfare analysis has widened to address questions of equality. Ways have been sought to utilise the experience and participation of women which have altered the underlying definitions, principles and varieties of local and regional development (Aufhauser *et al.* 2003; Hudson 2007; Rees 2000; Rönnblom 2005; Sen 1999; Schech and Vas Dev 2007). Similarly, recognition of ethnic and racial minority interests has helped design varieties of local and regional development that tackle discrimination, promote positive role models, raise educational aspirations, and increase economic participation (Blackburn and Ram 2006). The heterogeneity of places helps rather than hinders the framing

of distinctive and context-sensitive approaches to local and regional development.

Ultimately, our central question — what kind of local and regional development and for whom — is concerned with competing visions of the 'good society' (Galbraith 1997). In an allegedly 'post-ideological' or 'post-political' age (Žižek 1997), there is a tendency to reduce such issues to technical questions. However, we have stressed that a clearer understanding and analysis necessitates a greater awareness of the values that underpin local and regional development in any given society. Apparently neutral questions, such as 'what works?' and 'what are the successful models?', remain imbued with politics. Indeed, narrowly short-term and/or pragmatic approaches can limit the search for effective public policy and undermine enduring and potentially more sophisticated and sustainable responses to local and regional development concerns. For this reason, then, answers to the question of what kind of local and regional development and for whom require us explicitly to annunciate the principles and values which should underpin local and regional development. In short, we need to bring the normative dimension back into our discussion (Markusen 2006).

### **Towards holistic, progressive and sustainable local and regional development**

Building upon this analysis of definitions, geographies, varieties, principles, values and distributional questions, the following outlines our normative



version of holistic, progressive and sustainable local and regional development (Pike *et al.* 2006). ‘Development’ is defined as the establishment of conditions and institutions that foster the realisation of the potential of the capacities and faculties of the human mind in people, communities and, in turn, in places (Sen 1999; Williams 1983). Local and regional ‘development’ should be part of more balanced, cohesive and sustainable approaches. A holistic approach interprets close relations and balanced integration between the economic, social, political, ecological and cultural dimensions of local and regional development (Beer *et al.* 2003; Perrons 2004), notwithstanding the potential trade-offs and conflicts involved (Haughton and Counsell 2004). It connects directly to Sen’s (1999: 126) view of a broad and many-sided approach to development which:

involves rejecting a compartmentalized view of the process of development (for example, going just for “liberalization” or some other single, overarching process). The search for a single all-purpose remedy (such as “open the markets” or “get the prices right”) has had much hold on professional thinking in the past...Instead, an integrated and multifaceted approach is needed, with the object of making simultaneous progress on different fronts, including different institutions, which reinforce each other.

The holistic approach sees development as necessarily broader than just the economy and encourages wider and more rounded conceptions of wellbeing and quality of life. It attempts to move beyond the narrow economism of

“dissipated indicators” (Morgan 2004: 884) like GDP and income per head to develop new metrics that better capture broader conceptions of local and regional development (Bristow 2005; Geddes and Newman 1999; Sen 1999). Earlier, less developed versions of holistic thinking may start by recognising the parallel contributions and potential for integration of economic, social, cultural and environmental policy without an explicit local and regional focus and beyond the immediate realm of local and regional development but with the potential to contribute to its goals. Critics may question the practical feasibility of such an apparently all-encompassing approach. Hirschman (1958: 205), for example, argued that its “...very comprehensiveness...can drown out the sense of direction so important for purposeful policy-making”. Institutions and policies may struggle to intervene and shape such a wide and complex set of relationships in order to develop localities and regions. The challenge to integrate the often dominant concerns of economic efficiency with social welfare and environmental sensitivity is certainly formidable. Yet, without questioning dominant conceptions and seeking to understand the relations between broader dimensions of local and regional development, more balanced, cohesive and sustainable development of localities and regions may remain beyond reach.

A politically progressive local and regional development is underpinned by critiques of capitalism and a belief in the need to challenge the social injustice of uneven development and spatial disparities (Harvey 2000). This approach is potentially holistic. It emphasises the role of the state together with civil society in tackling local and regional disadvantage, inequality and poverty.

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The inclusion of social actors, such as trade unions and community associations, can serve to broaden the focus of local and regional development beyond narrowly economic concerns and propose alternatives (Pike *et al.* 2005). While their narrow, theoretical economic efficiency in allocating resources is recognised, institutionalism and socio-economics reveal how markets are underpinned by frameworks of institutions and conventions (Polanyi 1944; see also Martin 1999). As Scott (1998: 102) argues “...superior levels of long-run economic efficiency and performance are almost always attainable where certain forms of collective order and action are brought into play in combination with competition and markets” (see also Rodríguez-Pose and Storper 2006; Wade 2003). Progressive local and regional development seeks to tame and regulate markets to ameliorate their tendencies toward instability and unequal economic, social and spatial outcomes that may undermine aspirations for balanced, cohesive and sustainable local and regional development. In opposition, regressive forms of local and regional development are often characterised by wasteful inter-territorial competition, zero-sum notions of places ‘developing’ at the expense of other places and an understanding of ‘development’ as a harsh meritocracy in which unfettered markets are relied upon to much greater degrees to arbitrate the realisation of the potential of people, communities and places.

Progressive local and regional development is based upon a set of foundational, even universal, principles and values such as justice, fairness, equality, equity, democracy, unity, cohesion, solidarity and internationalism (Harvey 1996). Such ideals are often forged in place and can connect local,

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3 particular, struggles – ‘militant particularisms’ – in a more general,  
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5 geographically encompassing common and shared interest (Harvey 2000;  
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7 Williams 1980). In establishing the principles and value that define what is  
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9 meant by local and regional development, public discussion and social  
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11 participation within a democratic framework are integral. Sen maintains that:  
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17 It can be argued that a proper understanding of what economic needs  
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19 are — their content and their force — require discussion and  
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21 exchange. Political and civil rights, especially those related to the  
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23 guaranteeing of open discussion, debate, criticism, and dissent, are  
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25 central to the processes of generating informed and reflected choices.  
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27 These processes are crucial to the formation of values and priorities,  
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29 and we cannot, in general, take preferences as given independently of  
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31 public discussion, that is, irrespective of whether open debates and  
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33 interchanges are permitted or not. The reach and effectiveness of open  
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35 dialogue are often underestimated in assessing social and political  
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37 problems (1999: 153).  
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46 Democracy, then, suggests opportunities for the definition of social and  
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48 economic problems, although there are clearly substantial geographical  
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50 variations in its practice. While democratic institutions are important, their  
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52 relationship with development outcomes is not simple but reflects the degree  
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54 to which opportunities for participation are taken up. As Sen (1999: 159) puts  
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56 it: “The achievement of social justice depends not only on institutional forms  
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58 (including democratic rules and regulations), but also on effective practice”.  
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The universal values central to the progressive approach are neither fixed, nor are they simply the products of relativist definitions of ‘development’ determined by particular places in specific time periods. Such introspective and narrow understandings may only fuel inter-territorial competition and zero-sum interpretations of development. Instead, the specific local and regional forms, articulation and determination of principles and values are normative issues subject to varying degrees of local and regional social determination, shaping and struggle within their particular national and international contexts (Standing 1999). They are normative questions for localities and regions of what their local and regional development should be about. Keating, Loughlin and Deschouwer (2003) argue that political and social agents instrumentalise and utilise territorial identities to provide socially rooted frameworks for such politics. Formalised institutions of state and civil society adapt and mould such interests. Based upon their specific interpretations of concepts and theories, localities and regions attempt to find and reach their own particular ‘syntheses’ of distinctive models of local and regional development conditioned by cultural values, institutions and prevailing modes of social and political mobilisation. Drawing upon the ‘post-development’ critique (Gibson-Graham 2003), this view rejects any notion of ‘one-size-fits’ all models and underpins the growing variety and diversity of local and regional development approaches. Yet, while reflecting particular and specific local and regional aspirations, needs and traits, such locally and regionally determined models or resolutions should not be developed independently of the more universal values outlined above. Such local and

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3 regional resolutions are shaped by the balance, dialogue, power and relations  
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5 of local and regional interests, sensitive to their specific contexts, and  
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7 mediated through multi-layered institutions of government and governance  
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10 (Morgan 2007; Rodríguez-Pose and Storper 2006).  
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15 The third guiding principle is sustainability. Sustainable local and regional  
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17 development is holistic in encouraging broader notions of inclusion, health,  
18  
19 wellbeing and quality of life (Haughton and Counsell 2004; Morgan 2004) and  
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21 incorporating understandings of the relations between the economic, social,  
22  
23 ecological, political and cultural dimensions of development. Sustainability is  
24  
25 potentially progressive if it prioritises the values and principles of equity and  
26  
27 long-term thinking in access to and use of resources within and between  
28  
29 current and future generations. Sustainable development seeks to recognise  
30  
31 distinctive structural problems and dovetails with local assets and social  
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33 aspirations to encourage the kinds of local and regional development that are  
34  
35 more likely to take root and succeed as locally and regionally grown solutions  
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37 (Hirschman 1958; Storper 1997). Heightened recognition of such context  
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39 sensitivity has promoted diverse and sometimes alternative approaches to  
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41 local and regional development. This connects to the recognition of the  
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43 leading role of the state in more holistic, programmatic and systemic forms of  
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45 local and regional policy:  
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55 ...environmentally sustainable development implies a more important  
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57 role for the public sector, because sustainability requires a long-term –  
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59 intergenerational – and holistic perspective, taking into account the full  
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benefits and costs to society and the environment, not only the possibility of private profitability (Geddes and Newman 1999: 22).

Depending upon the circumstances and aspirations of particular localities and regions and often very real constraints (Mainwaring *et al.* 2006), balances and compromises inevitably emerge from considerations of sustainable development when connected to holistic and progressive principles.

Critics may see an utopian and infeasible wish list in this particular normative approach. But the principles and values of holistic, progressive and sustainable local and regional development are being explored and put into practice by international, national, regional and local interests (Pike *et al.* 2006). The International Labour Organisation's local development framework focuses upon human development and 'decent work' (Canzanelli 2001). Further international examples – amongst many others under development and experimentation (see Beer *et al.* 2003; Scott 1998) – include alternative economic strategies based upon local currencies (Leyshon *et al.* 2003), sustaining local and regional economies (Hines 2000; Mitchell 2000; Pike *et al.* 2005), labour-oriented investment funds (Lincoln 2000), international fair trade and local development (Audet 2004), localising food provision through public procurement (Morgan 2004; Ricketts Hein *et al.* 2006), gender-sensitive approaches (Aufhauser *et al.* 2003), public sector dispersal (Marshall *et al.* 2005; Myung-Jin 2007), mobilising community engagement to formalise undeclared work (Williams 2005) and ecological modernisation by encouraging local development through 'de-manufacturing' and recycling

(Gibbs *et al.* 2005). While not exhaustive, these examples provide concrete cases of at least some elements of our approach.

Holistic, progressive and sustainable local and regional development is not a 'one-size-fits-all' template or universal model. Neither is it a plea for local and regional relativism and voluntarism in definitions of development driven solely by local and regional interests in splendid isolation. Instead, this approach outlines guiding principles informed by the kinds of universal values discussed above that may influence the social determination of definitions, geographies, varieties, principles and values for local and regional development that are geographically differentiated and change over time. A holistic, progressive and sustainable approach is but one answer to the fundamental question of what kind of local and regional development and for whom.

### **Conclusions and the limits and political renewal of local and regional development**

Understanding local and regional development requires an engagement with its most basic nature. What it is, what it is for and, in a normative sense, what it should be are critical starting points. This paper has addressed the fundamental question of what kind of local and regional development and for whom? Issues of definition were reviewed to examine what is meant by local and regional development, its historical context and the importance of its geographies of space, territory, place and scale. Definitions of local and regional development have broadened to include economic and social,



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environmental, political and cultural concerns. Definitions are socially determined in the context of historically enduring themes, principles and values, incorporating geographical differentiation and changes over time. Geography matters as a causal factor in local and regional development. Territories evolve as defined areas in which particular definitions of local and regional development are constructed and pursued. Places shape the geographical diversity, unevenness and context of local and regional development. Economic, social, political, environmental and cultural processes influence local and regional development across, between and through different scales. Different kinds of local and regional development connect to socially determined and normative principles and values that differ geographically and change over time. Distinguishing the objects, subjects and social welfare aspects of local and regional development helps understand the often socially and geographically uneven distribution of who and where benefits or loses from particular forms of local and regional development. Holistic, progressive and sustainable principles and practices suggest a particular normative view of what local and regional development should be about.

Yet, there are limits to what local and regional development can achieve. Broadened understandings of local and regional development are necessary but not sufficient for more evenly distributed territorial development, wealth and wellbeing across and between localities and regions. The macroeconomics of growth and the extent and nature of the engagement of national states within the international political economy raise fundamental

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3 questions concerning the problems and prospects for local and regional  
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5 development:  
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10 ...how, in a prospective global mosaic of regional economies, individual  
11 regions can maximise their competitive advantages through intra-  
12 regional policy efforts while simultaneously working together  
13 collaboratively to create an effective world-wide inter-regional division of  
14 labour with appropriate built-in mechanisms of mutual aid, and especially  
15 with some modicum of collective assistance for failing or backward  
16 regions (Scott 1998: 7; see also Hudson 2001).  
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29 Despite the changed context, nation states remain integral in recognising the  
30 plight of lagging territories and framing local and regional development, for  
31 example through regulating inter-territorial competition at the international,  
32 national and sub-national levels (Gordon 2007; Markusen and Nesse 2006;  
33 Rodríguez-Pose and Arbix 2001). Yet deep concerns linger about the  
34 technocratic character of 'quasi-governance', especially at the regional and  
35 local levels, its problems of accountability, co-ordination and transparency  
36 (Allen and Cochrane 2007; Skelcher *et al.* 2000; Pike 2002; 2004; Blackman  
37 and Ormston 2005) and the ways in which, internationally, devolution has  
38 largely failed to reduce local and regional disparities and, under particular  
39 conditions, has even served to exacerbate them (Rodríguez-Pose and Gill  
40 2005).  
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The potential constraints and limits suggest the need for the political renewal of local and regional development:

...in the absence of discussion on the goals and purposes of economic development policy, we will remain in a period of policy formulation which favours interventions targeted toward either reducing the costs of doing business or improving the competency of firms. Such emphases will ensure that theory is invoked to justify current practice, further diverting attention from the deeper underlying bases of economic deprivation (Glasmeier 2000: 575).

Politics explicitly recognises the normative choices about what local and regional development should be about, where and for whom. Such choices are not simply objective and technical assessments. They are wrapped up in specific combinations of universal and particular principles and values that require institutional mechanisms of articulation, deliberation, representation and resolution. As Scott (1998: 117) argues “Successful development programmes must inevitably be judicious combinations of general principle and localized compromise, reflecting the actual geography and history of each individual region”. Like Thompson’s (1963) understanding of social history, political practice forges the functional and geographical shape of the institutions of co-ordination and collective order for local and regional development (see Scott 1998). Achieving answers to the question of ‘what kind of local and regional development and for whom?’ – in the manner of Keating *et al.*’s (2003) distinctive locally and regionally determined syntheses

– involves compromise, conflict and struggle between sometimes opposing priorities. ‘Success’, ‘failure’ and ‘development’ in localities and regions are framed and shaped by processes and politics of government and governance.

A renewed politics of local and regional development hinges upon the questions of who governs and how power is exercised in deciding what varieties, institutions and resources frame, address and answer the questions of what kind of local and regional development and for whom? Parochial and introspective approaches developed at the expense of other people, classes and places are rejected (Beynon and Hudson 1993). Instead, potential exists in international inter-governmental co-ordination and national and decentralised decision making structures co-ordinating and integrating their relationships within multi-level institutional structures operating across a range of scales. This agenda may be criticised as utopian or too reformist and insufficiently radical in its approach. But it is important to recognise the practical difficulties which confront those seeking to transform public policy that occurs when rationality and power collide (Flyvbjerg 1998). Aspirations for local and regional development are beset with potential problems but not having a vision of what we want local and regional development to do and to look like would make such a task even harder.

### Acknowledgements

Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Chicago, 7th-11th March; 2006; the

Annual Symposium of the Economic Geography Research Group, Cambridge University, 20th-21st April 2006; the Regional Studies Association Conference, Leuven, 7th-9th June 2006; the Annual Conference of the Royal Geographical Society/Institute of British Geographers, London, 30th August-1st September 2006; Regional Studies Association Annual Conference, London, 21st November 2006; Institute of Regional Studies, Monash University, Melbourne, 13th February, 2007; the Symposium on Regions and Regionalism in the Asia-Pacific, FIAP, Flinders University, Adelaide, 21st February 2007 and the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, San Francisco, 17th-21st April 2007. We thank the participants in these events for their comments. We would also like to thank Neill Marshall and the two anonymous referees for their constructive advice and criticism.

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**Table 1: The eras of ‘Developmentalism’ and ‘Globalism’**

World framework	Developmentalism (1940s-1970s)	Globalism (1970s-)
Political economy	State regulated markets	Self-regulating markets (Monetarism)
	Keynesian welfarism	Schumpeterian Workfarism
Social goals	Social entitlement and welfare	Private initiative via free markets
	Uniform citizenship	Identity politics versus citizenship
Development (model)	Industrial replication	Participation in the world market
	National economic management	Comparative advantage
	(Brazil, Mexico, India)	(Chile, New Zealand, South Korea)
Mobilizing tool	Nationalism (post-colonialism)	Efficiency (post-developmentalism)
		Debt and credit-worthiness
Mechanisms	Import-Substitution Industrialisation (ISI)	Export-oriented Industrialization (EPO)
	Public investment (infrastructure and energy)	Agro-exporting
	Education	Privatization, public and majority-class austerity
	Land reform	Entrepreneurialism, sustainable development

Geographical	First World (Freedom of Enterprise)				National structural adjustment (Opening economies)		
Variants	Second World (Central planning)				Regional free trade agreements		
	Third World (Modernization via Developmental Alliance)				Global economic and environmental management		
Local and regional dimension	National spatial policy				Supranational and devolved (sub-national, regional and local) policy and institutions		
	Economic and social focus				Economic competitiveness focus		
	Growth redistribution				Broadening of 'development'		
					Regeneration		
Timeline	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Markers	United Nations (1943)	First Development Decade (1944)	Second Development Decade (1944)	Oil crises (1973, 1979)	Debt Crisis/The Lost Decade (supervised state/economy restructuring) (mid-1980s)	Globalisation New World Order begins (early 1990s)	9/11 (2001)
	Bretton Woods (1944)	Decade (1950-53)	Decade (1964-73)	New International Economic Order Initiative (1974)			
	Marshall Plan (1946)	Korean War (1950-53)	Vietnam War (1964-73)				
	Cold War	Non-Aligned Movement	Alliance for Progress (1961)				
						Earth Summit (1992)	Second Gulf conflict (2003)
						Chiapas revolt (1994)	Growth of China

Institutional developments	(1946-)	(1955)	UN Conference	Neo-liberalism		and India
			on Trade	Reaganism,		
			Development	Thatcherism		
			(1964)	Cold War ends		
				(1989)		
	World Bank		Eurodollar and	Group of Seven (G7) forms (1975)	GATT Uruguay	NAFTA (1994)
	and IMF (1944)		offshore \$		Round (1984)	World Trade
	GATT (1947)		market		Glasnost and	Organisation (1995)
	COMECON				Perestroika in	Asian financial crises
	(1947)				Soviet Union	(1997)
	US\$ as world				(mid-1980s)	Euro introduction
	reserve				IMF and World	(1999)
	currency				Bank Structural	
					Adjustment	
					Programmes	
					Single European	
					Market	

Source: Adapted from McMichael (1996)

**Table 2: Scales, socio-economic processes and institutional agents**

Scale/Level	Socio-economic process	Institutional agents
Global	Trading regime liberalisation	International Labour Organisation (ILO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organisation (WTO), inter-governmental organisations, nation states
Macro-regional	Information and communication technology network expansion	European Union, Member States, regulatory bodies, private sector providers
National	House price inflation	Central Banks, building societies, borrowers
Sub-national	Transport infrastructure	Public transport bodies,



	expansion	private companies, financial institutions
Regional	University graduate labour market retention	Universities, Regional Development Agencies, employers, training providers
Sub-regional	Labour market contraction	Employment services, trade unions, business associations, employers, employees
Local	Local currency experimentation	Local Exchange Trading Systems, households
Neighbourhood	Social exclusion	Local authorities, regeneration partnerships, voluntary groups
Community	Adult literacy extension	Education and training institutions, households, families

Source: Adapted from Pike, Rodríguez-Pose and Tomaney (2006: 37)

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**Table 3: Distinctions in local and regional development**

Dimension	Distinction	
Approach	Absolute	Relative
Autonomy	Local, regional	National, supra-national
Direction	Top-down	Bottom-up
Emphasis	Strong	Weak
Focus	Exogenous	Endogenous/indigenous
Institutional lead	State	Market
Inter-territorial relations	Competitive	Co-operative
Measures	Hard	Soft
Quantity/Quality	Extent	Nature
Objects	People	Places
Rate	Fast	Slow
Scale	Large	Small
Spatial focus	Local	Regional
Subjects	Growth	Equity
Sustainability	Strong	Weak

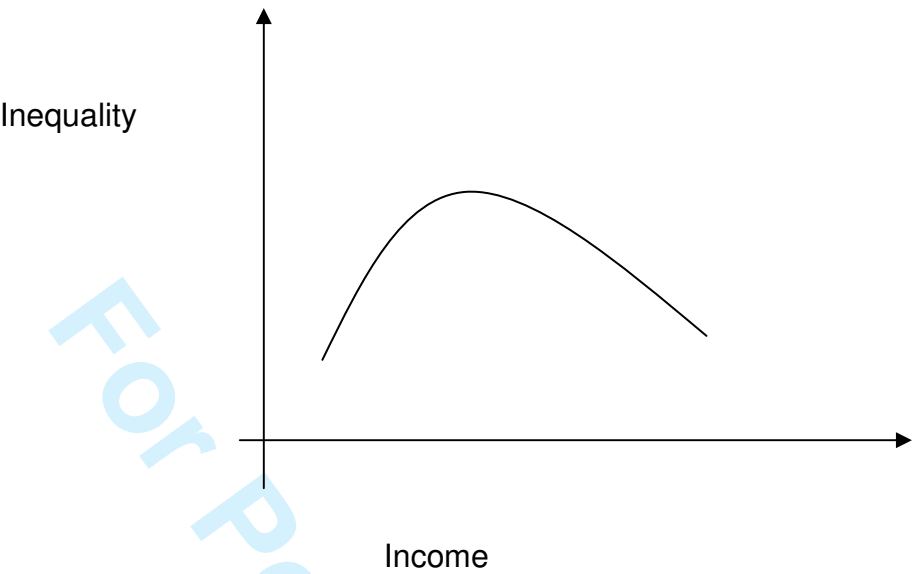
**Source: Adapted from Pike, Rodríguez-Pose and Tomaney (2006: 39)**

**Table 4: The objects and subjects of local and regional development**

Level/Scale	Objects	Subjects
People	Individuals	Education and training
	Households	Homecare services
	Families	Childcare
	Neighbourhoods	Neighbourhood renewal
	Communities	Community regeneration
Spaces, places and territories	Villages	Rural diversification
	Localities	Strategic partnerships
	Towns	Market town revival
	Cities	Growth Strategies
	City-regions	Local authority collaboration
	Sub-regions	Spatial strategies
	Regions	Regional economic strategies
	Sub-nations	Economic development strategies
	Nations	Regional development
	Macro-regions	Economic and social cohesion
	International	Aid distribution
	Global	Trade liberalisation

**Source: Adapted from Pike, Rodríguez-Pose and Tomaney (2006: 49)**

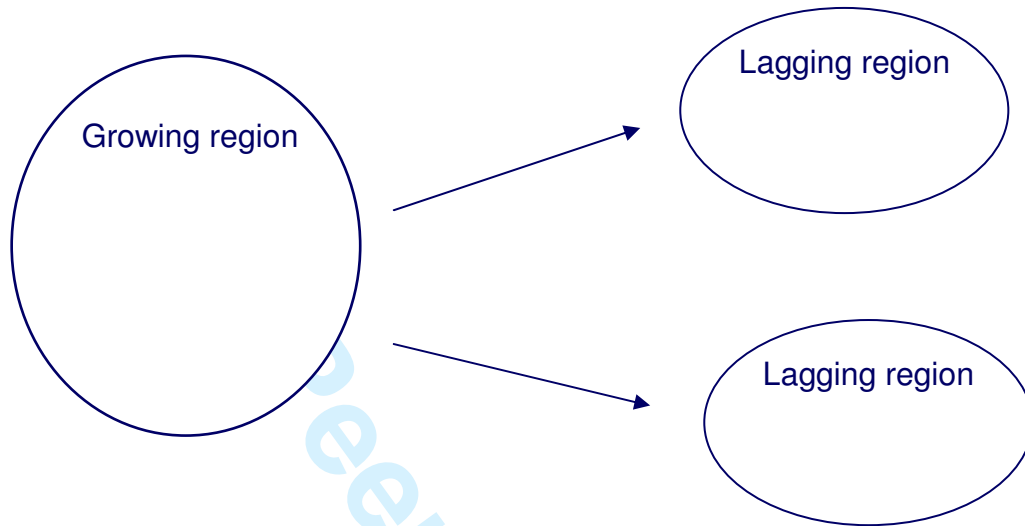
**Figure 1: The Kuznets Inverted-U Hypothesis**



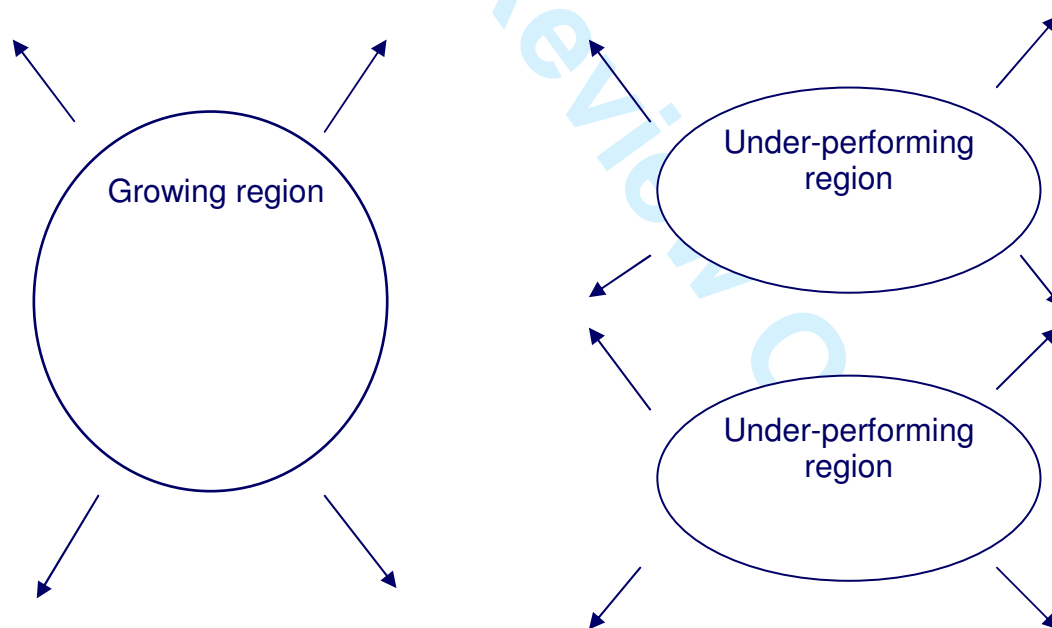
**Source: Adapted from Cypher and Dietz (2003: 54)**

**Figure 2: Models of local and regional development policy**

The donor-recipient policy model



The growth-oriented policy model



**Source: Adapted from Pike, Rodríguez-Pose and Tomaney (2006: 106)**